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HOWARD GRAY

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A. L. Sleyster,

HOWARD GRAY

AND

OTHER POEMS.



AARON L. SLEYSTER.

Preston, Minn.

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THE TEMPESTUOUS VOYAGE OF LIFE, AND IN WHOSE PERSON MY WORLDLY HAPPINESS IS CENTERED, I DEDICATE THE FOLLOWING LINES.

A. L. S.



PREFACE.

The author of these lines does not make any pretentions to literary ability, since his original training and present circumstances give no allowance to such claims. His only aim being to give, in a few coarse outlines, certain pictures of life, showing that lamentable disposition which parents frequently exercise toward their children, which so often brings ruin and desolation in the after life of persons, whose youth promised once a happy man or womanhood. If this sketch will have the effect to awaken a better sentiment in this respect, causing parents to prefer virtue and ability to rank and finance, his feeble efforts will have been attained.

A. L. S.



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HOWARD GRAY.

CHILDHOOD.

NE morning in the month of May
Among the hills I chanced to stray;
To hear the merry songsters chime
And fill my breast with thoughts sublime.

I wandered 'neath the cloudless sky,
The sweet wild flowers beguiled my eye;
I drank the fragrant morning air,
A thousand charms allured me ther.

I climbed upon a sloping hill And spied the sparkling of a rill, While gazing on the dale below Where violets and daisies blow.

How beautiful the glen did seem, The winding road, the babbling stream; The green clad hills on either side In grandeur with each other vied. A little cottage (now no more) Adorned this vale in days of yore; E'en now no trace is left to tell The tale, except an old, old well.

Here in this cottage, years ago,
There lived a dame whose step was slow.
Through age and toil her form was bent,
For well she knew what labor meant.

Her brow o'er-cast with silvery hair, Old age had left its furrows there; Her dim gray eye and hollow cheek Of worldly care a volume speak.

She had a son, though not her own, Now fifteen years, almost full grown; It was her daughter's only child Who Grandma's waning life beguiled.

His name is simply Howard Gray, Bright as a lark and quite as gay; A favorite with boys at school, And teachers also, as a rule.

Tall for his age, as I have said,
Dark hair, brown eyes, and cheeks so red;
A splendid form and much tanned face,
An image of both health and grace.

Their home was small and nothing grand, But all their own; also the land On which it stood, an acre lot, To them on earth the dearest spot.

And happy was the jolly pair; Though Grandma, full of anxious care, Young Howard soothed and cheered her on, Her only staff to lean upon.

And thus they lived; years came and went; Their lives, though lowly, were content; Their income small and incomplete, But every year they made ends meet.

But suddenly and unaware Young Howard was in dark despair; For Grandma's spirit was called home, And left him in this world alone.

Oh, fearful was that lonely night!
His very soul was filled with fright;
He seemed to hear the breezes moan,
"Howard, thou art left alone."

They buried her on her own ground At her request; a little mound Beside her husband near the cot Was Grandma Howard's favored spot. Here Howard knelt upon the ground With aching heart and look profound; Where could he find a place to stay? And yet he must that self-same day.

While musing thus, unnerved by grief, A neighbor came to his relief; A tricky man with forehead low, Who bore the name of Mr. Snow.

One of his eyes was dim with tears, The other, meanwhile, blinked with sneers; His heart from whence the tears he drew Was full of speculation, too.

If he could get this sturdy youth
To stay with him, would be, in truth,
A ready help upon the farm,
Especially around the barn.

To leave him here would be a wrong; No doubt he'd get him for a song. So he assumed a piteous face In which an expert well could trace

Deception of the meanest kind, To which young Howard was quite blind; His youth prevented him to see The vague look of hypocrisy. "Howard," said he, "don't worry so; To lose your home is hard, I know; It grieves me much to see you thus; My boy, just come and stay with us.

I have no doubt but we'll agree; I've known you long, and you have me, You know our folks are good and kind; As good a home as you can find.

I know they'll gladly welcome you, My wife and little Bessie, too; Now, Howard, just make up your mind, And come at once, if you're inclined."

At this the youth sprang to his feet,
And did not ask him to repeat
The kindly message that he brought;
Nor did he hesitate for aught,
But grasped him warmly by the hand,
"Kind sir," he cried, "at your command."

And while the sun casts its last rays,

The western sky seemed all ablaze;
The two start down the narrow road
And reach in safety their abode.

MR. SNOW'S HOMESTEAD.

MAGINE now a farmer's yard,—
No palace built for pomp or show;
A simple house with barns and sheds,
Such was the home of Mr. Snow.

Yet picturesque, with all, this place;
The high cliffs towering in the west
All covered o'er with cedar shrubs,
Protect it from the wintry blast.

A spring comes oozing from the ground Beneath a bluff and forms a rill, Which bubbles forth both night and day And slowly winds around the hill.

Here at the spring at close of day

The lowing herds will flock around,
Which echoes through the deep ravine

And wakes the silent depth profound.

We spy upon the western slope,
The snowy flocks are grazing still;
We hear the bleating of the lambs
While skipping up and down the hill.

But turning now to Mrs. Snow,
A gentle woman, kind and plain.
Who treated everybody well,
And in return received the same.

Unlike her husband in his greed
For wealth, possessions, land and pelf,
She strove to live for others, too:
Not always thinking of herself.

Their only daughter. Bessie, too,
Was like her mother, kind at heart:
And, though she was but twelve years old.
She was as wise as she was smart.

Here Howard stayed for five long years,
And worked each day from morn till eve':
And though he tried to please them all,
One cent of pay he ne'er received.

'Tis true his mistress was as kind To him as though he was her son: And Bessie cheered him more than all; His deep affections she had won.

It happened thus, one morn in spring.

The winter snows had passed away.

When first the birds began to sing:

'Twas in the merry month of May,

That Howard, coming from the field,
Was met by Bessie near the rill;
And side by side they wandered home,
Which made his heart with rapture thrill.

For though he never told her yet,

He loved the maid with all his heart,

While she, though young and full of glee,

Was also pierced by Cupid's dart.

While walking thus they were espied By Mr. Snow, who was concealed Behind a heavy growth, near by, Of hawthorn bushes in the field.

The old man muttered 'twixt his teeth,
And swore full vengance on the youth;
For, though they did not speak of love,
Without a doubt he guessed the truth.

He had his fears; for Howard was
A boy no longer, but a man;
"Perhaps he thinks to marry her
But I'll prevent it while I can.

To have my only daughter wed,
A beggar of a lowly race,
I'll never tolerate the match;
To-morrow he must leave my place."

MORNING.

EAUTIFUL morn at break of day,
The dusky gloom half cleared away,
And all around is still.
The shades of night still linger near
As if they lie in wait to hear
The eternal Master's will.

The earth in silence still is bound,
And far or near, we hear no sound
Save babbling of the rill;
Far out upon the eastern sky
The morning light we seem to spy
Far, far beyond the hill.

The grass and fields are wet with dew;
Dim objects coming to our view,
Show day is drawing near.
The swaying of the lofty trees,
Their branches floating on the breeze,
Shake off the dewy tears.

And now that glorious orb appears, The light of day six thousand years Casts forth its golden rays. A thousand birds are on the wing And make the air with music ring,— Proclaim the Maker's praise.

This was the scene that met the eyes
Of Howard who was first to rise,
This lovely morn in spring;
He ne'er in all his life before
Beheld the aspect morning wore
As such a glorious thing.

He really did not understand
Why everything appeared so grand
Where'er his eye might fall;
He did not know, though he was wise,
He only looked through Bessie's eyes,—
So blind is love to all.

He did not know so bright a morn
Had dawned upon his life, forlorn
With busy toil and care:
Again the flocks await him now
To which he makes with haste, I trow,
With heart as light as air.

Just as the breakfast bell was rung The morning chores were all done And they sat down to eat. If Howard knew his fate in store.

Could note the frown his master wore,

No doubt his heart would beat.

How little did young Howard dream
That soon a cloud should come between
Him and his soul's delight.
To know how soon his dream would end
And part him with his nearest friend,
Would blast his visions bright.

THE APPROACHING STORM.

FTER breakfast Howard lingered
For a moment at the door,
And he noticed that the bright sun
With dark clouds was covered o'er
And he heard the thunder roar.

What a change in the bright heavens All within a single hour! All the earth was bright with sunshine. Now 'tis sighing 'neath a shower In submission to its power.

While he thus in wonder pondered How a change could come so soon, Mr. Snow called his attention And invites him in his room, For, alas! to hear his doom.

Howard, always quick and active, Followed him as heretofore, Thinking to receive his orders For the day and nothing more; But the old man shut the door.

DECEPTION.

OWARD, sit down for a minute,
For I have something to say
Regarding your future prospect:
I wish to inform you to-day.

For some time I have been thinking
It would be an excellent plan,
For you to hunt up a fortune
Like any industrious man.

Out West, you know, there are chances
For any young man who will take
Right hold of the plow and labor;
There's thousands of acres to break.

Just think, a farm of your own, sir;
You sow and you reap what you please,
And with a few years of good luck, boy,
You may live in comfort and ease.

By keeping you here a life-time,
Would be a neglect on my part;
You know I always am willing
To give a young fellow a start."

WOUNDED PRIDE.

HIS said, he gave a sudden glance
At Howard, who seemed in a trance
Scarce knowing what it all could mean;
But soon awakened from the dream.
And stretched himself to his full height
With countenance alert and bright;
His tone was manly, clear and brave,
Unlike his master, who to save
His ill-shaped mouth, spoke through his nose
In tones as high as tenor goes.

And Howard spoke: "Then be it so Since you're determined I shall go; But, pray before I leave your place, Explain to me why this disgrace Should be inflicted on a youth Who al ways dealt with you in truth; For well I know that all you said Are empty words; and fear instead—The interest which you have in me, As to my future destiny, Is mere pretension, just to hide A sheep-pelt with a wolf inside."

RAGE.

ERE Mr. Snow burst forth with rage; "Think not that I am blind with age; For though my sight is failing me, With clear distinction I can see Your efforts with a honeyed word Without a cage to catch a bird. The reason, if you needs must know, Why I insist to have you go, Is simply that you do not seem To know there lies a gulf between My daughter born of better birth And you, the commonest of earth; E'en yesterday you walked with her And talked as though you really were Her equal both in birth and rank, A scheme quite common with a crank;

And, now, please understand that I Don't let such liberties pass by Unheeded till it is too late,
Nor trifle with my daughter's fate;
I only, (any father would,)
Use my own judgment for her good;
Because at present she's too young
To know to scorn a flattering tongue;—
And, like all other girls, by Jove,
She believes there's such a thing as love:
And, so you see, it is but just;
You asked for reason, and I trust
This is sufficient; I attest
I gave it at your own request."

TRUE MANHOOD.

Was statue-like: the avalanche,
For one so young, was too severe.
His thoughts were mingled pride and fear,
But courage coming to his aid
He ne'er was wont to be afraid;
Replied in tone both firm and clear,
"I'm satisfied with what I hear,
That it is time for you and me
To part, since we cannot agree;
But still I contradict your word:

Your groundless fears seem too absurd; For in my life I never thought Nor did I breathe to her of aught That could awaken her pure mind, Nor felt at any time inclined To break the friendship which I hold Far dearer than you do your gold; And some day you may learn to see That you accused me wrongfully. But you have told me to depart, And I obey; but, ere I start, I wish to sell the house and lot Which Grandma left me when she died; I hate to lose the little cot,"--Here Howard's courage failed to hide The memories of long ago Which filled his aching heart with woe.

Not long did silence thus prevail,

For soon was heard the chink of gold,
And for a paltry sum the house

And lot to Mr. Snow was sold.

Then Howard bargained for a steed,
His noble Prince—a dappled gray—
The finest horse for miles around,
Well worth the sum he had to pay.

He then departed from the room,
Where Mrs. Snow awaited him.
She seemed to know what had transpired
For both her eyes with tears were dim.

Too full for words, she could not speak;
But Howard, coming to her aid,
Said all she'd done for him he hoped
Some future day should be repaid.

She did not interfere with Snow,
For well she knew she could not move
His iron will; and self conceit
Would never bear to be reproved.

At length she managed, through her tears,
To tell him she was not to blame,
And if she could prevent the step
How gladly she would do the same.

She held his hand with friendly grasp—And spoke as only mothers do,
With all the feeling of her heart,—
"May Heaven's blessings follow you."

Then Howard looked about the room,
No trace of Bessie could he see;
She was in her own room up-stairs
To hide her grief and misery.

Of all that had been said that morn No word escaped her anxious ear, For Mr. Snow did speak so loud That all within could plainly hear.

So Howard went up to the barn
And saddled there his noble steed;
And for the last time to the trough
His faithful animal did lead.

With trembling hand he held the rein
While Prince was prancing by his side;
Hot tears escaping one by one,
To hold them back in vain he tried.

If he could get just one more glimpse
Of Bessie ere he left the farm,
It would do him a world of good
And could not do her any harm.

While lingering there a moment more,
Towards the house he glanced an eye,
And noticed Bessie came at length
To bid her friend a last good-bye.

CRUEL SEPARATION.

OW pure she looked, the peerless maid, With azure eyes which now betrayed Her loving heart and stainless mind,

And sympathy for human-kind. No rose can ever blush so sweet To match the tint upon her cheek, And permanent this hue remains. The blue blood flowing through her veins Affords her grace and common sense. Much self-respect and innocence. Her long, smooth tresses in a braid Are of a sunny, golden shade; A few stray locks curl to and fro Around a brow as white as snow. She greets him with a sad, sweet smile, So sweet and melting it beguiled The lonely hour; his mind grew calm It seemed to be a soothing balm For the time being, but to fear When once away 't will re-appear-A keener pain than e'er before Without ceasing forevermore. With sobbing voice the maiden broke The silence, and with feeling spoke:

"Howard, I've come to say good-bye;
Accept this lock of hair and try
To not forget your little friend;
And promise me that you will send
A message often; it will be
So very lonesome now for me."
She ceased 'mid smothered sobs and sighs
While big, bright tears streamed from her eyes.

Howard, watching her with fondness, Stood with folded arms to hear. Every precious word she'd spoken, Fell like music on his ear.

So o'er-come with sudden sadness.
Scarcely able to reply,
Fully realizing what it
Meant to bid a friend good-bye.

Then in tones so full of feeling,
Meanwhile trying to control
The wild billows of emotion
Fiercely raging in his soul.

"Little Bessie, I shall treasure
This, thy lock of golden hair,
And that you may e'er be happy,
Is my fondest wish and prayer.

Now accept from me a token—
This ring mother used to wear;
Would I had some nicer keepsake,
Time prevented to prepare.

How I wish I could repay you
All the kindness shown to me;
But for this may heaven bless you,
Is my small reward for thee."

Then he took her hand and held it,
Raised it gently to his lips;
Tears were freely flowing as he
Kissed the dainty finger tips.

"Now, good-bye, farewell, friend Bessie, I must go, but know not where; But our God who rules in heaven Will, I trust, a way prepare."

Then he vaulted in the saddle,
And reluctant rode away;
Prince now being tired of waiting
Was most anxious to obey.

Through the mud and water splashing Caused by recent falling rain;
Heavy clouds were moving onward—
Swiftly through the heavenly train.

Bessie, motionless, was standing
Where he left her 'neath the elm;
And her heart in deep affliction
Seemed to sink and overwhelm.

There she stood and watched him sadly
Till he reached the last high hill;
And she saw him glancing backward
Waving her a last farewell.

Then she slowly staggered homeward, Entering the kitchen door; Feeling sick at heart and weary, She fell fainting on the floor.

HOWARD'S FAREWELL TO THE OLD HOMESTEAD.

"To leave the haunts of home where childish footsteps trod,
To resignate that spot to life's destroying flood;
To leave the road, the creek, the distant shady wood,
This brings the human soul oft' in a gloomy mood."

—Sipko Rederus.

"AREWELL to the place of my birth and my childhood!"
Said Howard while reaching his former abode.

No more did he see his old Grandmother sitting

Beneath the old maple tree hard by the road.

While gazing upon the quaint, old-fashioned cottage,

The hard beaten path from the road to the door,
The balancing well-sweep with moss-covered
bucket,

Recalls the sweet sunshine of childhood once more.

Then slowly dismounting he hitched his proud courser,

Retracing the foot-prints he left long ago, He sought the green graves where his sires were sleeping,

And there he gave vent to unspeakable woe.

Just like a panorama the scenes of his childhood Came up for review in an exhaustless stream; Both bitter and sweet recollections came forward, But Bessie,—the center of every theme.

Thus, for a whole hour, in silence he pondered
Until his brave steed called his master away.
Then bidding a hasty farewell he departed,
Bound for the West he starts out on his way.

At twilight that evening he reached a small village, And stopped over night at a farmer's hotel.

Being fatigued with riding, slept soundly

And woke at the sound of the old breakfast bell.

Thus day after day Howard slowly pressed forward, Each hour brought him farther from all that was dear;

O'er mountain and plain, over hill and through valley,

And wherever he gazed new scenes did appear.

WANDERING.

OR weeks young Howard kept his pace, Riding along from place to place; Thus far his efforts to obtain

A situation were in vain.

A stranger seldom stands a show;

He tried it and he found it so.

At length in wonder and surprise,—
A western prairie met his eyes;
Of all the sights he e'er beheld
This one in grandeur far excelled.
He gazed about him far and wide,
And saw the fearless cow-boys ride
Upon their nags of every hue;
Across the untilled plains they flew;

Their ornamented bridle rein
With buck-skin fringe, their limbs the same;
A sailor shirt and loose cravat,
And on their heads a broad-brimmed hat.

At noon he looked around to see
If he could find a shady tree
Beneath its boughs to contemplate,
And think of his unhappy state.

While gazing o'er this broad wild plain, No house, no fence, no tree or grain, One green-clad, rolling sea of land, A solitary sight, yet grand, For thousands sweetest flowers abound, With sweet perfume, for miles around. Unplucked, unseen, they droop and die And ne'er attract a human eye.

In solitude they shortly reign, Their life begins and ends the same.

MEDITATION.

An emblem of lone misery,
And, like these blossoms, pass away
Unheeded, friendless, to decay;
To live alone and ne'er attain
A name of honor or of fame,
Ne'er know the sweetest joys of life,—
A happy home and loving wife,
Sweet, prattling babes to bless each day
With sunshine in their childish way.
Such bliss, thought he, I'll never share,
And almost yielded to despair.

HE FINDS A FRIEND.

UT, hark! the sound of horse's hoofs

Approaching him. He looked around—

Beheld a man with bearded face

On horseback followed by a hound.

His dark, keen eyes 'neath heavy brows
Express determined force of will;
And not alone his piercing glance,
His thin sealed lips are firmer still.

But as the rider nearer drew,

His countenance seemed less severe;

More pleasant features came to view

Which at first sight did not appear.

While Howard gazed it seemed to him This countenance he'd seen before; Each feature more familiar grew With memory and days of yore.

It was a mystery to him;
Yet, ere they reach their journey's end,
Their conversation seemed to prove
This stranger was a former friend.

At length he dared to ask his name,
While side by side they jogged along;
And Mr. Williams gave the same,
Nor did he deem his freedom wrong.

A cattle ranch now came to view:—
A sight quite common in the West,
To see the cow-boys circle round
*And lull the monstrous herds to rest.

And when they reached the shanty door
He felt quite well, despite his pain;
To find a friend so far from home
Revived his sinking hopes again.

That night was spent in telling tales
Of daring deeds in cow-boy style;
E'en Mr. Williams did relate
War stories causing many a smile.

The corn-cob pipes were oft' refilled;
A cloud of smoke filled up the room;
The flickering light upon a bench
Scarce visible amid the gloom.

Sometimes a song would rend the air
Followed by cheers or pistol shot;
They kept it up till late at night,
When each man sought his narrow cot.

At break of day the following morn
The boys were on their ponies' back
Across the prairie to the herds,
Light-hearted as their whip-lash crack,

^{*}In the evening, the cow-boys will circle round and round the herd, huddle them closely together; and finally the cattle will lie down to rest, where they remain till day-break the following morning. They call this practice, "Singing them to sleep."—A. L. S.

While Williams, with his youthful friend Departed for his city work. Young Howard was to share his home, Employed as private office clerk.

A RIDE ON THE PRAIRIE AT DAYBREAK.

OW beautiful and fresh the morn
Upon the prairie wild!
Each sparkling dewdrop on the field
Upon the riders smiled.

The wild rose bushes all around Perfume the morning air; The modest violets bespeak That God himself is there.

The little birds on every side
At their approach take wing;
While others, hidden neath the grass,
Their morning praises sing.

Far in the distance on a knoll A flock of cranes they spy;
Still farther on the radiant beams
Illuminate the sky.

The first few miles they rode along
But little did they say;
Each seemed amazed with nature's garb
At the approaching day.

It seemed to them serene, sublime,
A paradise restored;—
All but the tree whose tempting fruit
Our mother Eve allured.

On, on they sped; their coursers proud
Paced nimbly o'er the plain
With nostrils wide, curved, graceful neck
And massive, wavy mane.

At length the elder gentleman
A story did unfold,
Amusing to young Howard's ear;
And this was what he told:—

"Long years ago when I was young,
I think about your age,
Our country was in trouble then,
Rebellion fiercely raged.

Your worthy father and myself
Enlisted the same day;
Our boyish hearts just thrilled with joy
The day we marched away.

Our weeping mothers bade farewell
And kissed us o'er and o'er;
Our fathers trembling said good-bye
And watched us at the door.

But there was one, a neighbor girl,
Whose parting caused us pain;
We both had sought and craved her hand
But both had sought in vain.

How earnestly we both had tried To win this fair coquette; But on her heart we never made The least impression yet.

Sometimes I thought my chance was best And pressed my suit anew; But then, again your father seemed To feel elated too.

And thus we left her at the gate,
That charming morn in May;
Both sighed for Fanny Howard's love,
Your mother, Howard Gray.

Ah! how we pictured to ourselves
A boyish battle field!
With steady aim and dexterous arm
The musket we would wield.

Full soon we saw our big mistake; The marching was no fun; The heavy knapsack on our backs Grew very burdensome.

At night we'd lay our weary heads
Upon cold mother earth,—
The starry heavens for a roof,
A fence-rail for a berth.

For four long years we tramped about, Half dead and half alive; Our comrades dropped off, one by one, But both of us survived.

I often thought of our return
With mingled joy and pain;
It one should perish on the field,
Would be the other's gain.

But, as it was, we both went home;
And, strange as it may seem,
Our secret thoughts were just the same,
And Fannie was the theme.

Full soon I knew my destiny
Despite my earnest pains;
Your father had the inside track,
And all my hopes were vain.

I yielded meekly to my fate;
Her choice had settled all.
I moped about, while they, ah well!
Were married that same fall.

Since then I banished from my mind All thoughts of married life; And thus far I have kept my word, And lived without a wife.

I shortly after that moved West,
For I could not abide
To see the idol of my heart
As some one else's bride.

I heard about the fever that
Some fifteen years ago
Came sweeping o'er the little town,
And laid your parents low.

I heard your Grandma Howard claimed
The baby as her own,
And here you are to-day, my boy,
A man, and quite full grown.

Thus ends my story of the past,
And now I wish to make
A proposition unto you
For Fanny Howard's sake.

If you will stay with me a while,
And prove yourself a man,
I'll start you up in business
And help you all I can."

What could young Howard say or think
Of such a noble man?
Silence at such a time conveys
What idle words ne'er can.

His heart leaped up with gratitude And choked him for a while; His tongue refused to give a sound, He simply gazed and smiled.

'Tis wonderful how gratitude
Will turn our senses dumb!
While heart and mind o'erflow with words,
Our lips are sealed and mum.

He soon recovered and explained The silence on his part, Accepting, as you may suppose, With glad and thankful heart.

And ere the sun was half way up
The azure cloudless sky,
They reached the city, better friends
Than kindred knots can tie.

THE OLD HOME.

AFTER A PERIOD OF SIX YEARS.

IX years have passed since Howard left
The old Snow homestead near the cliff, The aspect is the same as when His lingering gaze beheld it then; But in the distance near the road We spy no more the old abode Where Grandma Howard lived and died. It was removed, and more beside; Her last long resting-place, the mound, Was tilled the same as other ground. No more are fragrant blossoms brought And strewed upon that sacred spot, Now covered o'er with waving grain Bending lowly o'er the same. The dandelions, as of old, Have turned the meadows into gold, Besprinkled o'er with sheep and cows. And shrubs on which the cattle browse; And just beyond is Mr. Snow Wandering slowly to and fro, In meditation deep and wild; He lost his wife, and now his child

Is growing weaker every day.
He fears she too will pass away;
He feels dejected and oppressed,
And with these words himself addressed:--

"Remorse, reproach, aye, that's the word! My very soul within is stirred To daily hear that doleful knell, Suffering agonies of hell. Why haunt me thus with demon force? Why make a wretched matter worse? At night when slumber should repose, My misery no mortal knows; My weary slumbers bring no rest; The scene within my troubled breast Is like a heaving, roaring sea, Whose angry billows leap with glee Until the winds grow calm and still, But leave its waters troubled still. And thus awaken every morn To combat with another storm; The heedless deed my hand hath wrought; Its vengeance on my head hath brought. Could I recall that one mistake, A life's atonement I would make. Oh! could I see her smile again! But ah! the wish is doubly vain! Her life which was so bright and gay,

Too soon will fade and ebb away.
Who can in all this wide, wide world
Escape the vengeance at us hurled,
When we have known a luckless hour
In which advantage gave us power
To blight a life by disrespect
Entrusted with us to protect?"

Thus Mr. Snow himself accused.

He knew full well he had misused
And placed his daughter's life at stake
By one rash deed, one great mistake.

For six long years she mourned and pined;
Each day he saw her health decline.

Her mother, too, had passed away

Five years ago the first of May;
And since the time her mother died
No friend in whom she could confide;
Alone and frail the tender maid
'Neath heavy burdens was dismayed.

She feared that Howard was no more; He promised her in days of yore That he would write her frequently; Which had he done, the ecstasy To feel and know he was the same, Would help her bear whatever came. But now she could not comprehend What had befallen her best friend;
Some highway robber must have slain
Her youthful lover, thus to gain
Possession of his horse and purse.
She knew not, but she feared the worse,
And worried on from day to day;
She sometimes would kneel down and pray
That God would take the life he gave
And give her rest beyond the grave.

Where are the cheeks once rosy red?
Where is the light elastic tread,
The luster of those azure eyes,
The heart so free from care and sighs?
Gone, like the graceful maiden form,
A faded flower 'mid wintry storm;
That cheerful voice no more will ring,
Nor sunshine to the household bring;
A few more days and all is o'er,
And Bessie Snow will be no more.

Her sire now fain would recompense
The error of his blinded sense.
Without delay he now intends
To tell her all, and make amends.
E'en now he means to tell her why
The messages ne'er reached her eye,
Which Howard sent from time to time,

And he as oft to flames consigned,
Not e'en aware what they contained,
He only knew his end was gained.
His guilty conscience quaked within;
He feels the consequence of sin
While hastening to the place where she
Was sitting 'neath the old elm tree
Asleep; he did not dare to wake
His injured child, her heart would break
While hearing such disgraceful news
With which her sire himself accused;
His whole frame trembled with dismay,
As cowardly he slunk away.

CONCLUSION.

HERE reclined the lovely maiden
In an easy rustic chair,
'Neath the elm tree's shady branches,
Drinking in the fragrant air.

How the gentle summer zephyrs
In the balmy even-tide,
Played around her golden ringlets,
As they from her shoulders glide!

There she sat enwrapped in slumbers,
With a brow so snowy white,
Even purer than the lily
Resting in her lap that night.

Wan and pale is every feature;
Is she dead, or still alive?
Crushed by grief, and broken-hearted.
Can a soul like this revive?

See the lingering smile that ripples
O'er those features white and pure!
Is she dreaming of her lover?
Can hope still her mind allure?

See! in dreamland she doth meet him; Smiles disturb that slumbering brow; With extended arms she greets him, She hath reached the haven now.

Hark! I see a form approaching,
Human footsteps drawing near,
While the sun's last rays are gleaming;
What can bring a stranger here?

Now he halts as if bewildered; Gazes on the wasted form, Breathes her name in accents tender, Helpless, hopeless, and forlorn. While he there a moment lingers, She awakens from her rest; Reeling, tottering towards him, Falls upon his manly breast.

"Howard, Howard, I am coming; This is heaven, keep me here! I have safely reached the portals; Where, oh! where is mother, dear?

See the angels hovering round us! Oh! behold that glorious throne! Safe at last from earthly sorrow, Howard, leave me not alone!

Oh, 'tis getting dark and dismal!

Howard, dear, I see you not.

Fold me closer to your bosom,

Leave, I pray you, leave me not!"

There, there on his bosom the maiden reclined,

Her lily white arms round his neck are entwined.

While murmuring breezes waft up to the sky
Her pure, stainless spirit enwrapped in a
sigh.

While he, with the sweet precious form in his arms,

Defies even death, and would shield her from harm.

But death was the victor and bore her away, And left him defeated, bemoaning her clay

THE END.

MISGELLAREOUS POEMS.



INTRODUCTION.

The following collection, comprising Odes, Epistles, lines in Albums, and other fragments, were written at different periods, as the occasions presented themselves. The author craves the public to bear in kind remembrance the fact that he is not reaching for fame in the literary world, for reasons heretofore stated; but simply consents to publish them at the earnest, repeated solicitations of friends. Should this little volume, falling by chance in the hands of some weary pilgrim, be the means of beguiling a lonely hour, the author's happiness will be thereby agreeably promoted.

A. L. S.



A PARODY.

H! we have a little daughter,

Jeanie Maud, Jeanie Maud;

And she's just as bright as water,

Jeanie Maud, Jeanie Maud.

She is all of three years old;

If the truth was really told

She is worth her weight in gold,

Jeanie Maud, Jeanie Maud.

She is worth her weight in gold;

Jeanie Maud.

When from labor I'm returning,
Jeanie Maud, Jeanie Maud;
Why my heart is fairly yearning,
Jeanie Maud, Jeanie Maud,
She will watch each passer-by;
How her little feet do fly
When her papa she doth spy,
Jeanie Maud, Jeanie Maud;
When her papa she doth spy,
Jeanie Maud.

She will meet me on the walk,

Jeanie Maud, Jeanie Maud,
And in cutest baby talk,

Jeanie Maud, Jeanie Maud;
She will tell me all the news,
Cheer me when I have the blues,
And my pockets she'll peruse,

Jeanie Maud, Jeanie Maud,
And my pockets she'll peruse,

Jeanie Maud.

SPRING.

That causes the snow-banks to melt and depart,

That spreads a green carpet o'er hill and through glen,

And beckons sweet flowers to blossom again.

All hail to the season that brings us fresh showers! That turns leafless bushes to cool, shady bowers—A home for the songsters, a place for their nest, Of all the four seasons, sweet spring-time is best.

SWEET SIXTEEN.

KNEW a maid of sweet sixteen,
The fairest I have ever seen.
Her presence made me feel serene,
Content and happy;
Her graceful gait and modest mien
Did quite entrap me.

The first time that we ever met
Is something I shall ne'er forget:
It lingers in my mem'ry yet
As fresh as ever:
And from that day my mind was set.
To change it never.

'Twas in the school-days of my youth I first beheld my love; in truth I was an awkward boy, uncouth,

But I could feel then,

And make as good a choice, in truth,

As any big man.

And after that with honest pride
We loved to wander side by side,
Upon the prairie far to ride
With horse and carriage,
Until at length I claimed my bride
By lawful marriage.

And since that time I often thought
And plessed the sacred hour which brought
Our hearts together on the spot
At our first meeting,
Nor can I wish or think of aught,
But bless that greeting.

She left her home and kindred too,
Her friends, who always had been true,
E'en to her birth-place bade adieu,
And felt contented
To live where not a soul she knew,
And ne'er repented.

That confidence, that heavenly trust,
That jewel in a woman's breast,
Outshines, out-glitters all the rest
Of her sweet nature;
And curse the man in whom she trusts
If he mistreat her.

Now some folks take it as a rule
A boy who falls in love at school
Is either simple or a fool,
But I know better;
A flame thus kindled does not cool
To icy fetter.

A youth can make a choice as well
While young: his tender thoughts will tell
Whose image in his heart doth dwell;
That is the omen,
Unless he is too full of hell
To love a woman.

A youthful lover loves but one,
Will raise her to that sacred throne
Expressly built for her alone
To reign forever;
Nor can the fates his love dethrone,
Or his faith sever.

But older men are not so true;
They are too fond of something new,
And in a twinkle change their hue
They keep a "buzzin,"
Like bees 'mid flowers sipping dew,
And love a dozen.

LINES IN AN ALBUM.

ROSE, more than all other flowers,
Through balmy nights and sunny hours,
Through many sweet, refreshing showers,
Conceals its heart with magic power;

Until at length reluctant yields, And modestly at last reveals Its purity so long concealed, Embalms its fragrance o'er the field;

And so, friend Rose, you're truly blessed! Half of your friends have never guessed The pure, warm friendship in your breast Known but to those that know you best.

TO MOTHER

ON HER SIXTY-THIRD BIRTHDAY.

ONG years have slowly traced the course of time,

Since you still lived at Arnhem on the Rhine, A little orphan girl, scarce five years old, Thrown on the busy world so rude and cold. A tiny, sickly flower, too weak to bear
The storms of life without parental care.
And yet, as if by magic, you survived,
And see your children's children live and thrive.
We fain to-day would gather round your hearth,
To celebrate the day that gave you birth,
And gather flowers, the sweetest on the lea,
And weave a wreath most beautiful to see,
And crown your brow around your silvery hair,
And pin it with a hundred kisses there.
But, mother dear, no blossoms can we find,
There's naught out-doors but snow; the cold, cold
wind

Is howling fiercely o'er the frosty main;
It seems that spring will never come again.
And so we bring a jewel, you must take
And wear it daily for your children's sake.
The three small sets, two rubies and a pearl,
For Bess and me, and for our little girl.
Remember that we often wish and pray
That God may comfort you from day to day.
That many, many years may yet be thine,
That beams of hope may ever round you shine,
And may ten thousand blessings be your lot;
And in your prayers, we crave, forget us not.

CONGRATULATION.

O you are to be married with Birdie, I hear; The announcement by mail has just reached my ear;

It gave me great pleasure, as you may suppose, Enraptured with joy from my head to my toes.

Accept my best wishes and hearty good-will; May the sweet dream of love your youthful hearts fill;

May affection increase as you live for each other, And never grow cold, is the wish of your brother.

A BIRTHDAY WISH.

TO MRS. ---.

EAR Mrs —, we come unexpected,

To honor the day you so sadly neglected;

For, as we are told by —, your daughter,

Your birthday took place once a year, as it ought
to.

For forty-three years the twenty-fifth of September

Is the day we should bless, make glad, and remember;

So Bessie and I have put both heads together,

As we often have done in such cold, rainy weather,

And felt it a pleasure in some way or other

To show forth our love, as we would to a mother.

So we offer this *keepsake, and pray you will take it,

- As you would from your children; we as cheerfully make it,
- And wish you besides many years and much pleasure
- To bless those around you, as you've done without measure.
- And may they in return strew your pathway with roses,
- And your children remember the commandment of Moses,
- That their lives may be long in this great land of freedom,
- Where our heavenly Father will keep and will feed them,
- Is the wish of your friends, Bessie, Jeanie, and Aaron,
- Dutch artist at Preston, not a duke nor a baron.

^{*} A pearl card case.

COURTSHIP AT THE SEA-SHORE.

EARS ago, they called me bashful,
Nor could I deny the charge;
But what happened at the seashore
Is, I think, not known at large.

Listen, then, and I will tell you What has happened unto me; When like other youthful lovers, I sought pleasure by the sea.

When I came there, I found shelter In a first-class, grand hotel; Plenty cash which father gave me, Made me think I was a swell.

I soon formed the sweet acquaintance Of a maiden fair to see; Young and cheerful, kind and pleasant, And her name was Winnie Lea.

Every day we were together;
Sang and danced till late at night;
Grew so fond that we could scarcely
Bear each other out of sight.

For some time we knew no sorrow,
And my money flew like chaff;
Every wish of her, I granted
With a cheerful, hearty laugh.

Scarce two weeks passed by in sunshine;
Then my bliss came to an end,
For she introduced a fellow
Who appeared to be her friend.

He was rather tall and slender,
And his clothing seemed to me
To be pasted to his body,
Especially around the knee.

After that I knew no comfort,
For she was no longer mine;
And that dude, the ghostly shadow,
Kept her from me half the time.

How I struggled to defeat him; Prayed a gentle zephyr might Waft him to the land of specters, Where he did belong by right.

And although she seemed to like me, Told me I was good and kind; Yet I ne'er could keep her from him And it preved upon my mind. So at length I plainly told her That I never did believe It was lady-like for ladies, To encourage and deceive.

As I glanced at her I noticed
Tears bedimmed her bright, blue eyes;
And in less than fifteen minutes
We renewed the former ties.

Then once more I felt elated;
Believing every word she said;
Pride now swelled my youthful bosom,
Thinking I came out ahead.

The next morning after breakfast
I was gazing down the stair;
Down below that dude and Winnie
Had another meeting there.

I was jealous in a minute;
Would have given half a farm,
If I could have knocked him endways
As he touched my Winnie's arm.

I could scarcely keep from jumping; Twice I made a little start; Then my left foot slipped a trifle. Down I thundered like a dart. Oh! the slide was rough and rugged, Seemed to me a mile in all; Every jog became more painful Till I landed in the hall.

There I sat and gazed about me,
Looking for a place to hide;
Heeding not the pain I suffered,
From this rough toboggan slide.

There stood Winnie bending o'er me,
Asking if I wasn't hurt;
While her eyes were sparkling brighter
Than the diamond in my shirt.

And that dude, he made me tired,
Stood there trembling at the knee;
With his eyes as big as saucers
He kept staring straight at me.

I arose and shook my feathers,
And endeavored to explain;
But they could not keep from laughing
And I saw 'twas all in vain.

So I climbed upon the stairway, Looking like a cyclone wreck; Feeling like a fool and wishing I had broken my stiff neck. I just kept my room till evening.

Left the dude and her alone;

And at night when all was silent,

Packed my trunk and skipped for home.

Since that time I never ventured High-toned courting by the sea;
But I found a little school "marm"
Who is good enough for me.

And the dude may keep his Winnie,
Feed her clams straight from the shell;
On our farm we've eggs and butter
Which will answer us as well.

AN ACROSTIC.

IRLS are, methinks, the sweetest flowers
Entrusted in this world of ours,
Resplendent to behold.
True modesty, as I have seen,
In maidens smiles, a flower serene
Engraved as if in gold.

Many a blossom, every hue, Adorn the fields and gardens, too; None can however us beguile, Nor comfort bring, like maiden smiles.

ODE TO PRESTON.

AIR Preston, Fillmore county's seat!

Of whom I wish to sing to-day,

While gazing from this high retreat,

About a half a mile away.

Here on the bluffs, among the trees,
Beneath the shady boughs I rest,
Fanned by the balmy summer breeze,
Sweet zephyrs wasting from the west

The winding, sparkling stream below For years has grandly swept along; Now glistening in the sunset glow, Its ripples mock the wild bird's song.

With graceful curve it finds its way
Half sheltered by the lofty brow
Of towering cliffs of rock and clay,
Half hidden 'mid the verdure, now.

Its other bank, a rising ground,On which our pleasant village rests,A picture of a grassy mound,With trees and buildings on its breast.

The Court House dome points to the sky,
With tall church spires on either side;
The old grist-mill arrests the eye,
Reflecting in the river tide.

The iron bridge which spans the stream,
A noble work of art and grace,
The dam beyond improves the scene,
And adds more beauty to the place.

High on the topmost hill beyond
We see the city of our dead;
While down below, the silent pond
Is sleeping in its liver bed.

The hum of industry we hear,—
The chiming anvils all around
Like music falling on our ear,
The vales re-echoing the sound.

Upon thy streets are genial men,
Each in his chosen branch of trade,
Who wield the cares consigned to them,
While glancing on the progress made.

Thy daughters, fairest on the earth,
Adorn thy homes with modern grace;
Prove what a healthful clime is worth,
With rosy cheeks and smiling face.

Oh, Preston. thou art wondrous fair!
Where'er our eye may chance to stray,
We meet a scene of beauty there;
All nature smiles on thee to-day!

AN EPITAPH.

BURY here with ink and pen,
And hope I'll never meet again,
A skunk in human shape.
And, though he lives, he's dead to me;
With stinkards I could ne'er agree,
Nor mourn their loss with crape.

FIFTY BELOW ZERO.

Oh, dear, dear!
We have had a plenty
Jack Frost here.

Jack must be a hero
Who loves snow;
Mercury at zero,
Or below.

Thirty, forty, fifty,
Nothing strange!
North wind blowing briskly,
Still no change.

Not a sign to brighten;
It appears
Much too cold for white men
To live here.

But we'll have to stand it
Until spring;
For we can't command it
To take wing

When the balmy breezes
Come and go,
And no more it freezes,
Good bye, snow!

Birds will sing as sweetly
As before;
Flowers again will greet me
As of yore.

So I'll stop complaining
And exhort
Myself no more to rhyming,
But stop short.

WELCOME.

'IS autumn now, and I behold
Yonder beauteous, distant grove,
The tree-tops tinted brown and gold;
There, there's the place I love to rove!

The little warblers on their wing
Will soon seek homes in warmer climes;
No more the distant woods will ring
No more our pleasant village chime.

But fare-thee-well, my little friends,
I do not deem your course as wrong;
But in the spring, pray come again,
And cheer us with another song.

And thus, friend Nellie, you have flownNot to a sunny, southern state,But to Dakota's western clime,Allured there by your destined mate.

May Heaven bless you, is the prayer
Of all your friends you left back here;
We hope when balmy spring returns,
You with the birds will re-appear.

TWILIGHT.

ENTLE twilight, hour of rest,

Is the thought in every breast;

After busy toil and care

All will join thy rest to share.

Sweet to lay our work aside,

And with thee an hour abide,

Looking backward on the day

In a meditating way;

On the course that we pursue

And we feel our strength renew;

Weary limbs lose half their pain,

Sinking hopes revive again.

Lowly as our lot may be,

Twilight's hour to all is free.

EPISTLE TO JOHN AND DAVID.

MY OLD SCHOOLMATES.

I am thinking of you, boys,
And the times we had together
In our early, childhood joys.

And if rightly I remember,
While I sit and ponder here,
We all made our first appearance.
All within the self-same year.

I oft' think I can imagine
Thoughts within our mothers' breast,
When the three compared their babies,
Each would think her boy the best.

Those were hours of golden sunshine; What thought we of want and care? Safe upon our mother's bosom, What on earth could harm us there?

But, alas! we had no knowledge, Could not feel a mother's love; Could not feel the sweet devotion, Next to that of heaven above.

Next came hours of playful childhood When our infancy was o'er; First from chair to chair, then farther, Till we ventured out of door.

Even then we could not compass

Nor appreciate the bliss,

Till some accident would happen,

And get healed by mother's kiss.

Even now when I'm in trouble
I would fly to mother's breast;
Tell her all my care and sorrow,
And receive her fond caress.

Next came school-days with green primers
And that awful A. B. C.,
As we twisted, sighed, and stammered,
Standing round our teacher's knee.

There we stood, three little urchins, Gazing round in every nook; On the floor, or at the ceiling, Any where except the book.

Talk of patience with such pupils,—
It would drive a Job insane;
It was doubtful after lessons,
If we knew our given names.

But at nooning all were active,

Then our minds grew sudden bright;

We could shout and dance with laughter,

Or enjoy a school-boy fight.

I remember well the frolics
At the school-house, number eight,
When we lived in Alto township,
In the dear old Badger State.

There in later years we often
Spelled the other districts down;
And rhetoric exercises
Added laurels to our crown.

I recall the many parties
Of those joyful days gone by.
And the bashful, rosy maidens,
As we kissed them on the sly.

How the girls would slap and scold us,
Heeding not our woeful cry;
While a roguish smile was lurking
In the corner of their eye.

Lovely maidens, tender hearted,
They forgave us naughty men;
Their bright cheeks with crimson glowing,
Tempting us to try again.

But adieu to old time pleasure,
As the hour is getting late;
It seems strange we should have drifted,
Each within a different state.

And although we now are severed From the scenes we held so dear; Let the ties of friendship ever Be renewed from year to year.

THE BOAT RIDE.

stood one summer evening all alone
Upon the iron bridge; I leaned upon
The railing, and noticed that the sun
Was slowly sinking out of sight beyond
The distant hills; the western sky aglow
With golden rays, reflecting on the stream;
A sight so beautifully grand to see.
The graceful willows on the bank did seem
In dreamy mood to sway and lowly bend
As if they tried to lull the stream to rest.

Above the dam came drifting with the tide
A tiny boat which bore a youth and maid,
Both young and full of hope and life they seemed,
Contented as the fragrant air they breathed.
The youthful maiden seemed so pure and young,
A lovely rosebud, drifting on the tide;
Far sweeter than the wild flowers peeping from
Beneath the cliff which overhangs the stream;
And he, how gallantly he plies the oars,
And gazes on the form he holds so dear;
How carefully he doth select each word
Lest it should not be pleasing to the one
Who with her charms has turned into a heaven
This twilight hour; nor would he break the spell

To him far dearer than all other bliss, His joys complete, how could be wish for more?

I turned away, and wandered slowly home; Turned from the scene so sacred to them both. And left them in their joyous, happy dream; Unheard, unnoticed, save their Maker, God, Who in sweet nature's garb did smile on them With all the grandeur only known to Him.

A REPLY.

'Tis true, we cherish but few flowers Of all we gather far and near; And also of our many friends, But few our hearts hold dear.

Oft' I shall think of thoughts you give
The many callers at your home;
And wonder if in thy pure breast.
A thought of me is known.

ODE TO ALGONA.

LGONA, I behold thee still!
Though four long years have passed away.
Since destiny against my will,
Compelled me from thy streets to stray.

Can I forget the broad wild plains,
Can I forget the shady grove?
Ah no! in fancy still remains
The scenes where once I used to rove.

How oft' I wandered o'er thy hills
At early morn, at close of day;
The thought my breast with longing fills;
Too soon those moments sped away.

Thy green-clad teeming plains I see,
The sweet wild flowers of every hue,
The wild rose bushes welcome me,
Algona, I am still with you!

Thy grand majestic groves I see,
The hawthorn bushes covered o'er
With blossoms which oft' beckoned me,
Still 'waken memories of yore.

With horse-shoe curve the silent stream
Is slowly flowing calm and fair;
O'er hanging boughs bend low and seem
To see themselves reflected there.

And then again, the river tide Sweeps grandly on in hallowed bliss; Where sunny banks on either side, Are waiting for a silent kiss. Here on the bosom of the plain,
Encircled by the winding stream;
The fairest city on the main,
Algona, thou dost reign supreme!

To all four winds thy thoughts are sped Along the wires with lightning force; Thy produce likewise, be it said, Is marketed in every course.

For miles around the fertile soil
Brings forth each year abundant yield;
Large herds of stock with little toil
Are pastured on the untilled fields.

Upon thy streets are men who seem
To have ambition, pluck and pride;
Progression is the noble theme
Thy vales re-echo far and wide.

Thy homes show forth on every side,
The mark of industry and wealth;
Thy sons toil on with honest pride,
Thy clime affords them strength and health.

Thy daughters gracefully adorn
Thy homes or palaces of rest;
With countenance as bright as morn,
And love and virtue in their breast.

Adieu! adieu! thou prairie queen!
Adieu! broad fields of waving grain!
Thy shady groves, and winding stream,
Adieu! proud city of the plain!

TO A SINGER.

Her voice was ever soft,

Gentle and low—an excellent thing in woman.

-Shakespeare.

YEET singer of this western clime, Thy voice so pure, almost sublime, Thy name appropriate for thee A warbling birdie, blithe and free. Then let not sorrow marthy joys, Be not deceived by dudish boys; But if a man with noble heart Should say "Dear --- ere we part, Pray let me whisper in your ear," Tust lead him on, and you will hear A tale, though old, will seem so new, 'Twill tint your cheek a rosy hue. And you will breathe as sweet a note As ever swelled a birdie's throat; Your song will be just one short word: To you this may seem too absurd, But he will love to hear you sing, And trade his "coppers" for a ring.

"WHAT DO YOU WANT HERE?"

To the party who so successfully surprised us, November first, 1887, these lines are lovingly inscribed.

N dear old county, Fond-du-lac, Where I was bred and born. A land o'er-flowing as it were, With honey, milk, and corn.

I soon grew up to be a man, Light-hearted, wild and free; I cared not what the fickle fates Might have in store for me.

How happily the time passed by, Until, perchance, one day, A Scottish lass with winsome ways Happened to cross my way.

And if you think I could forget,
Kind friends, you're off the track:
When-e'er I cast her from my mind,
That moment she was back.

I struggled on from year to year, But ne'er obtained relief, Until at length I married her: That settled all my grief. She had her choice and named the day,
The first day of November;
A lucky day, the neighbors said,
And easy to remember.

And since,—each anniversary,
In our own simple way,
With three-score rosy girls and boys
We celebrate that day.

And so it was last Tuesday eve, We had another spree; And all the village children came To fill our hearts with glee.

Our little home is far too small
To let them romp and play;
We locked the door and fell in line,
And then we marched away.

And as we slowly marched up town, They all commenced to sing With joyous hearts they fairly made The air with music ring.

Each passer-by would halt with awe
To solve the mystery;
For so much sunshine after dark
Is singular to see.

We halted at my studio;
It was a glorious sight
To see them play the good old games
Till ten o'clock at night.

And Bessie previous had prepared A culinary show, With dainties for the little ones On a cloth as white as snow.

At ten o'clock they bade good night With wishes and good will, Long life, and peace, and happiness, Me-thinks I hear them still.

And then we slowly wandered home,
The moon shone wondrous bright,
The very heavens seemed to smile
Upon our heads that night.

And when we reached our cottage door,
I soon produced the key;
When lo! the door flew open wide,
Great Scott! what could it be?

Why there stood Gray, the Mayor, too,
And thundered in our ear
In tones that shook our little cot,
"What do you folks want here?"

And back of him stood Mrs. Gray, And Dr. Jones and wife; Nellie, Arthur, Emma, George, And Carrie, sure as life.

Oh! how they laughed and whooped it up,
The door still open wide;
While we stood looking sheepishly,
Like lambkins side by side.

They bade us enter, so we did,
But still felt ill at ease;
They seemed at home, (while we did not)
As happy as you please.

At length the truth began to dawn; 'Twas meant for a surprise,
And slow but sure the film came off
That seemed to fog my eyes.

I then beheld our kitchen board
Prepared by dextrous hands;
We soon were circled round the same
At the Ladies' kind commands.

What happened after that,—ah well,
'Tis useless to explain!
The gratitude we felt that night,
No words convey the same.

For who would dare so vain attempt,
To other souls impart
By writing down with pen and ink
The feeling of a heart.

We may not live a hundred years,
But this full well I know,
You'll hold a place within our hearts
Wherever we may go.

A SONNET.

ENTLE as a summer breeze fans a tree,
Sweet as a rose that first begins to bloom,
Mild as a ray of light from the new moon,
Innocent as a child from all sins free,
Content as a robin that sings with glee.
Bright as the golden sunbeams shine at noon,
Fair as zephyrs that still the evening gloom,
Pure as the whitest lily on the lea,
Happy as a rill that ripples sweetly by,
Lovely as the sunniest morn in May,
Attractive as a spring beside the way,
Modest as a violet bloming nigh,
Graceful as a cloud upon the sky,
Sweet Maid! thou art the subject of my lay!

LINES TO UNCLE AND AUNT.

ON THE BREAKING UP OF THEIR FAMILY.

HREE months have scarcely passed away
Since Bess and I did wend our way
Back to the land that gave us birth
And once more gathered round your hearth.

Like birds in the parental nest, We likewise found you truly blest With all your children; though full grown They still adorned the dear old home.

But now it seems a change has come, We hear they leave you one by one; Thus two have left you since last fall, You soon will have no bairns at all.

First, Mary with her roguish eye, With young McDonald dared to fly, On wild Dakota's plains to dwell Far from the home she loved so well.

Next, Agnes changed her maiden name; She, doubtless, thought it was shame For Mary to become a wife While she still led a single life. But such is life on every side;—A child grown up, cannot abide And feel contented and at home Until he has one of his own.

To marry is the safest way, For us poor mortals to obey The laws of nature and of life In happy wedlock, man and wife.

Of bachelors don't talk to me; Their happy life, so blithe and free, Is but a dry and wretched fate Compared with men who have a mate.

Nor old maids mention, if you please: Their life of comfort and of ease Is but a vacant life at best, And love a stranger to their breast.

Compare with them a wedded pair With three, four children, bright and fair, Who cheer them on from day to day, And, when they die, weep o'er their clay

Your pleasant home where I have spent So many an evening of content; Those parties, when I was a boy, I oft recall to mind with joy.

'Twas there I recollect full well, Up to my ears in love I fell With bonnie Bess; it makes me laugh, I call her now my "better half."

But, ah! 'tis sad, we all must own To see the children leave their home, As one by one their mates they find And leave the dear old folks behind.

But life is transient: this we know, Like flowers we come, we bloom and go; Old blossoms slowly fade away, While new ones glisten bright and gay.

A PRAIRIE FIRE.

Sacred to the memory of Edward and Kate Maloney, friends of the author, and very dear to him, who were destroyed by a prairie fire at Huron, Dakota, in the spring of 1887.

HE sun was shining bright and clear
Upon Dakota's plain,
While Ed Maloney in the field
Was busy sowing grain.

His sister Katie with a friend Were in the house close by, Merrily chatting, not aware That danger was so nigh.

The wind was blowing fierce and wild Across the level plain,
But not with thunder, hail or snow,
Nor cheerless drifting rain.

It was a fiendish, prairie fire,
Like demons leaping forth;
Its fury on destruction bent,
A hell upon the earth.

The flames were raging to the sky
With roaring, crackling sound;
With lightning speed it swept along
The dead grass on the ground.

The frightened maidens leaped with fear Out in the open air;
And Edward with the horses came
Just as the fire drew near.

A gust of wind, with fire and smoke, And flames of burning hay Swept o'er them in a single stroke And took their breath away. There lay the poor unfortunates
Upon the burning ground;
What could they do to save their lives
With fire all around?

So unexpected did it come,
No time to contemplate;
To perish 'mid a sea of flames
Appeared to be their fate.

Dear God! we do not understand
Why those pure lives should fall,
And meet with such a frightful death;
They were beloved by all.

So young; so full of hope and life,
Devoured by reckless flames,
Here 'mid the ashes on the sod
Behold the charred remains.

Wail! distant hills, and mourn with us, Our friends have perished here: Moan! gentle, summer breezes, moan, And shed a dewy tear!

Come, all ye songsters of the air,
And gather round the scene
And tune your saddest, sweetest notes
In melody serene!

Wild, teeming plains, upon whose breast,
The sad event took place.
Moan to the corners of the earth
When darkness hides your face!

Look down, ye angels, from above, And teach us to be calm; Anoint the aged parents' hearts With soothing, healing balm!

How sweet there is a hope beyond
This mortal scene of woe,
Where saints are clothed in spotless robes,
As pure and white as snow.

LINES TO MISS ----.

HE flower you kindly gave to me,
As on the street I passed you by,
Is truly beautiful to see.
In brightness it resembles thee,
But not so pleasing to the eye.

Its beauteous hue a crimson shade, Supremely bright; but ah! I sigh To think how soon 'twill droop and fade; The sweetest flower, the fairest maid; Yes, all on earth must wane and die.

LINES TO A YOUNG LADY.

Upon reading a few poems composed by her at the early age of thirteen.

RIEND—,—,with your sparkling eyes,
I always knew that you were wise;
But, really, girl, I am surprised
In thee to find
Such thought; who would have guessed could rise

In thy young mind?

Hold to the muse that guides your mind
In tender years, and you will find
She'll be a friend both true and kind
In grief or joys,
And not inconstant as the wind
Or fickle boys.

Although the world should frown or smile,
And mock your efforts for a while,
Some day your stanzas will beguile
Some weary breast,
Who will appreciate your style
And call you blest.

How sweet when one can think and write
And feel the mind has taken flight;
It seems to soar far out of sight;
Enraptured thought
Steals o'er us in the stilly night
With joy we sought.

Our mind, in truth, is our best friend,
On whom we always can depend
As soon as we can comprehend.
An hour alone,
The greatest blessing fate can send
We all must own.

And should you stray out in the wood
Some day, perchance in gloomy mood,
And o'er some sad misfortune brood,
The gentle muse
May turn the saddest hour for good,
And stop the blues.

She'll show you nature, and portray;
The hills and valleys will seem gay
At early dawn; at close of day
All nature's fair,
The groves in their magestic sway
Invite you there.

You'll feel above the common lot,
The cruel world can harm you not
You will not wish or breathe for aught
But to remain,
And linger near the sacred spot
That knows no pain.

Then keep on with the gentle strain,
Your efforts will not be in vain,
'Twill bring you joy, and ease your brain
To make a rhyme;
Your mind will brighten up again
With thoughts sublime.

WELCOME HOME.

ELCOME——, welcome home,
Welcome to thy native clime!
Welcome to thy parents' cottage,
Let their tenderest love be thine

Friends on every side will greet thee,
Here where thou art known by all;
Some perchance with tears of gladness,
Some with praises thee appall.

Not with honeyed song of praises
Do I greet thy presence here,
Flattery is but deception
And is not within my sphere.

But thou knowest, in gloomy weather Rays of sunshine will beguile Many a dreary frown we harbor, And replace it with a smile.

Thus the cheerful smile of girlhood,
Casts upon our weary way
Ravs of sunshine, thoughts of gladness,
Bidding older hearts be gay.

Youthful maidens are like rosebuds; On the bush, how purely bright! But remove them, soon they wither, Almost vanish out of sight.

Ne'er can they embalm their fragrance Like a full grown blushing rose; Left by thorny stem protected, 'Mid the leaves until it blows.

Thus I welcome thee, friend——.
Safe 'mid fond parental care;
May their tender love and guidance
Be thy counsel everywhere.

HOMEWARD.

"With secret course, which no loud storms annoy, Glides the smooth current of domestic joy."

— Fohnson.

OME from labor I'm returning,
And for rest I long and sigh;
Weary limbs are fondly yearning
While our little cot I spy.

Humble is our little cottage,
But 'tis large enough for three;
It affords us ample shelter,
And 'tis heaven on earth to me.

There a smile for me is waiting
As I enter through the door;
When I cast my cares behind me
Half my weariness is o'er.

Though the world smile on me coldly,
Still my loved ones fondly cling,
And uphold me as a hero
Who can do most anything.

A FRAGMENT.

S I came home to dinner
The other day at noon
As hungry as a sinner
And stupid as a loon,

Our little daughter met me,
As fast as she could fly;
She had some news to tell me
I noticed in her eye.

And long before she reached me
She told me that the cat
Had "free tute lichel tittens
In papa's old black hat."

How eagerly she told me
This funny bit of news;
Then with a dozen questions
She drove away my blues.

Oh! precious little children,
You fill our hearts with glee!
Why some folks don't like babies
Is a mystery to me.

COMPANIONSHIP.

AN EPISTLE TO MY FRIEND, AND COMPANION OF FORMER DAYS.

AM thinking of you, Clarus,

And the days of long ago,

When we both were in the Grange Store
I above and you below.

Well I know the place was dirty
All around in every nook;
And when e'er the wind was blowing,
Goodness, how the building shook!

There we lay 'mid ragged bed clothe's
Spread upon the dusty floor,
Talking of our future prospects
While we heard the blizzard roar.

And at night while "cold as blazes,"
We would seek our humble bed,
And upon the caseless pillows
We would lay our weary heads.

There we lay amid the rubbish,
With the coal stove all aglow,
And through cracks behind the counter
We could spy the drifting snow.

Rats and mice, instead of angels,
Poured out blessings on our heads;
And sometimes in playful frolics
They would skip across our bed.

We would 'waken from our slumbers
When our customers would knock
At the door so bright and early,—
Sometimes nine or ten o'clock.

Then we jumped as if bewildered With the loud and bold alarm; Scratched the bed behind the counter Like two roosters in a barn.

Some would think life was a burden With encounters rude as this:
But it seems to me, friend Clarus,
Like a pleasant dream of bliss.

Like a dream I still remember, Cherish it with honest pride, How I wish we still could wander In our friendship, side by side.

But 'tis past; yes, gone forever;
But our thoughts will ever flow
Backward to the Grange Store building
And the joys we used to know.

Here our friends would come to see us
From the country and the town;
I recall them all quite clearly,
But I need not write them down.

Memory will clasp them fondly; Hold them with a fond embrace; And I see them in a vision, Well I know each smiling face.

There your noble little sister,

To her duties would attend;

Make out statements for her brother,

Speak a kind word for her friend.

There she toiled from morn till evening
While the customers came in
With their pails of eggs and butter,
Or, sometimes, a little tin.

How some folks would think and wonder Would it wash, or would it fade;
Finding fault and acting silly
On perhaps a ten cent trade.

Do you ever stop to ponder
How we fixed that Dr. C.,
His grammatical effusion
Did not worry you and me.

How we conquered him with kindness,
Tamed the brute so fierce and wild,
Till he was as meek and gentle
And submissive as a child.

But why write another feature?

I have given you a start;

If you would recall more stories,

I refer you to your heart.

I oft sit in meditation
And recall the blissful past;
Bitter drops are also mingled
Which remain while life doth last.

TO A HAWTHORN BLOSSOM.

WEET hawthorn blossom, welcome!
Thrice welcome unto thee!
Thy perfume is so wholesome
And very dear to me,

Thou art the fairest emblem Of purity I know; In truth thou dost resemble A flake of spotless snow. The lily may excell thee,
In size I know it will;
But when e'er I smell thee
Thou art the dearest still.

BREAKING A COLT.

A worthy farmer of renown
Was sitting on the green one day,
Beside his farm house south of town.

His hopeful son whose name was Jack, Came from the barn-yard on his way, Leading a long-haired, stubborn colt To let it drink some rods away.

Good-natured Jack, he tried his best To lead the vicious, kicking brute; But all his efforts proved in vain, The beast seemed very hard to suit.

Old Smith, by this time getting mad, Exclaimed, "Why don't you ride him Jack? If I were you I'd fix him soon, I'd climb upon his pesky back." But Jack possessed a little sense,
And thinking while his father spoke,
Replied, "I have a good long neck,
But do not care to have it broke."

"Confound it, let me show you how!"

The old man yelled, and rose meanwhile;
And climbed upon a four board fence,

Assuming an assuring smile.

"Bring forth that hoss!" the colt was brought;
He tried his best to get astride;
The colt was not quite near enough;
His son pushed on the other side.

At length the old man took a leap
And landed square upon his back;
He seized the rein, and smiled once more,
And then commanded "Let go, Jack!"

At first the colt seemed paralyzed
With fear, and stifly paced away;
While Smith called back, "What do you think?
I'll ride a colt like this all day."

No sooner had he said these words

The colt reared with a sudden bound,
And flung the old man in a heap

(Most sad to see) upon the ground.

The colt went skipping o'er the green,
While Smith arose and tried to speak;
He shook the knots out of his legs
His words were anything but meek.

His son came running to the scene,

His heart with sympathy was touched,
And asked him in a tender tone,

"Say, father, did it hurt you much?"

The old man answered, but with pain,
He was not in a speaking mood;
"Perhaps it did not hurt me much,
But didn't do me any good."

LINES IN AN ALBUM.

The many times we used to meet,
To practice our first acting play,
The drama, called, "Out in the Streets."

We sent for wigs and tableau lights,
And fooled away our hard earned cash;
And all to play a single night
The farce entitled, "Hans von Smash."

Then "Lady Audley's Secret," which
We played with ample pomp and pride;
And then our company got ditched
And got into a fuss besides.

It strikes me now, I hope I'm right,
That men who have to work all day,
Should go to bed and rest at night,
Instead of fooling with a play.

LINES TO A LADY FRIEND.

Who was longing for the return of her parents, who were abroad.

HILE gazing in this cheerful fire

Bright sparks are flying from the grate;

My heart o'erflows with strong desire

To try and cheer poor lonesome —.

Bright sparks of fire of brilliant hue,
Oh! mock me not when I am sad,
Just teach me something I can do,
To cheer my friend and make her glad.

I met her on the walk to-day,
And gazed upon her snowy brow;
And something in me seemed to say
Your little friend is lonesome now.

I looked again and I could read
A thought I knew she would not own;
Her longing was severe indeed,
But bravely bore her grief alone.

Her parents both have gone abroad To try Eureka's milder clime, Where violets spring from the sod, And roses blossom all the time.

Thy parents in the land of flowers
Still linger near the ocean; yet
Though balmy air beguiles each hour,
Think not that they can thee forget.

Their daily thoughts I know, are thine
In flowery dell or near the sea
While gazing on the foamy brine,
When wrapped in slumbers dream of thee.

So cheer up——, do not yield

To homesickness and lone despair,

Pray listen to a friend's appeal,

Who joy and sorrow with you shares.

A few short months and spring again Will make us glad as oft before,
Thy parents will return, and then
'Twill be like happy days of yore.

WORSHIP ON THE HILL.

SUNDAY MORNING, MAY 6TH, 1888.

GAIN I breathe the fragrant air; once more Gaze on the vale I oft' beheld before, And rest upon the same old rocky brow, All snow and ice a month ago; but now Bedecked with beauteous blossoms fair to see; On every side they seem to smile on me. A little goldfinch, scarce two rods away Upon a bush pours forth his sweetest lay; Be not afraid, my little friend, nor quit Thy charming lay, or twig on which you sit. I will not harm thee nor molest thy song, I love thee well, how could I do thee wrong? Sweet bird, knowest thou this is the Sabbath day? And this our place of worship on the hill? Beneath the canopy of heaven we'll pray Together, worshiping the Sovereign will Of Him, our Maker and our God of love, Who said that he would look from heaven above Where two or three were gathered in His name. And pour abundant blessings on the same. Then let this be our service of to-day. I sit and listen, while you sing your lay, Praise God, on whom we all for breath depend: Praise God above, with me, my little friend!

TO MR. AND MRS. A. P. SMITH.

OF PIPESTONE, MINN.

HE melancholy wintry days again, Have cast a gloomy aspect o'er the main; Two months ago the summer days were o'er, And ever since we heard the Storm King roar. But yesterday and day before it seemed As if I did not feel the cold, and dreamed We had a few warm, balmy, sunny days, And fancied that I saw the golden rays Among the parting clouds, upon the sky, A summer scene and pleasing to the eye. My dream was not a dream, but really true, The two short days of summer sunshine, too, Were 'wakened memories of other days, Affection's coals rekindled to a blaze, When you and your beloved wife were here To fill our hearts with gladness, and good cheer.

HUSH, THE SUMMER WINDS ARE SIGHING.

USH, the summer winds are sighing, Gently, sadly 'mid the gloom, While we place a precious treasure; Slowly, gently, in the tomb. Young and fair was winsome Minnie, Loved by all who knew her best; But, alas, her days are numbered, And we lay her down to rest.

Tears we shed of deepest sorrow,
But they never can restore
Minnie and the years of sunshine.
We shall see her smile no more.

But there is a home above us
Where a blessed Savior waits,
Beckoning his children onward
To the pearly, golden gate.

Here we bow in meek submission, Father, God, thy will be done; Take our richest earthly treasure Savior, bear her safely home.

FARMERS' SONG.

AIR,—"TRAMP, TRAMP, TRAMP, THE BOYS ARE MARCH-ING."

S we gaze the county o'er,
Farmer's hearts are getting sore,
As we look upon the ruined fields of grain,
Caused by chintz bugs and by rust,
Imps of hades 'neath the dust,
Gnawed the roots and killed our growing crops again.

CHORUS.

Tramp, tramp, tramp, through Fillmore County,
Cheer up farmers and be brave;
In perhaps another year
Not a chintz bug will be here:
And our rolling fields with golden grain will wave.

Just look back a year ago
When we first began to sow,
Oh how little did we think 'twas all in vain;
As from day to day we'd toil,
Sowing in a fertile soil,
And expected soon to gather in the grain.

CHORUS.

Oh it was an awful sight,
To behold our fields grow white,
Long before the time to reap, to bind, and shock,
Getting worse with every morn,
Then they ruined half the corn,
And we had but little hay to feed our stock.

CHORUS.

But we wintered safe and sound,
While the snow was on the ground,
Though our stock looked rather poor and gaunt
last spring;
And to-day we're all alive
With our thrifty, noble wives,

And we seem to hear the babies sweetly sing;-

CHORUS.

So then let us try once more.

Not to feel so blue and sore,
For this year our sheds are loaded down with hay;
Corn and "taters" look quite well
And we'll have some stock to sell,
So I bid you cheer up comrades and be gay.

CHORUS.

FARMER HARWOOD'S ADDRESS TO HIS WIFE.

"An honest peasantry, a country's pride, When once destroyed, can never be supplied."

Goldsmith.

NOTHER summer passed and gone,—
Another year has flown away,
Our homestead has the mortgage on,
Which ten long years we tried to pay.

Yes wife, we've labored hard, I vow; We've tried our best to get along, But really I'm discouraged now, For everything is going wrong.

Last year we had no crop at all;
No fodder for our hungry stock;
No soft, warm flannel in the fall;
No overcoat or fur trimmed frock.

Our children had to go to school In calico, so thin and cold, It made me shiver like a fool To see those garments patched and old.

Their sweet young faces had a look-E'en though they never did complain— I saw the tears they tried to brook; It gave my heart exceeding pain.

How oft' I watched them on their way Amid the drifting, biting blast; They tried to feel content and gay,— I did so hope 'twould be the last.

How truly glad I was last spring To see the snow-banks melt away; I loved to hear the wild birds sing; My heart re-echoing their lay.

Yes, carefully I tilled the ground, And scattered broadcast o'er the field The precious seed so plump and sound, Expecting an abundant yield.

From day to day I watched with care, As children do a treasured toy, And often I would breathe a prayer, I almost could have wept for joy:—

And all my hopes were gratified
With sunny days and showers of rain,
I felt content and satisfied
While gazing on the wavy grain.

But ah, the dreaded chintz bug came,
Together with destroying rust,
And took our growing crops again,
And flung my prospects in the dust.

And here we are again, dear wife,
Much worse off than we were before;
I never yet in all my life
Have felt so wretched, mean and sore.

A long cold winter coming on,
The storm king stares us in the face;
Our purse is empty; all is gone
Except the mortgage on the place.

I never stopped to think, dear wife;
To my regret. I was a fool;
I have been busy all my life.
And labor was the golden rule.

But now it seems there's something wrong;
When crops were good we could but gain
A living as we went along;
To pay up debt was always vain.

We waste our years of strength and health; Our days of vigor flying fast; Our produce brings but little wealth; Our labor cannot always last.

And then again, for things we need
We have to pay a double price;
Monopoly with fiendish greed
Cuts from our labor many a slice.

I'm but a plain, hard working man,
And have no extra brains to spare,
But know I labor all I can
To aid some wealthy millionaire.

Yes, millionaires as smooth as oil.
Increase in number every where,
While laborers with honest toil
Can't get enough to eat and wear.

I hate to grumble at the law;
My Bible tells me to be meek;
But want has struck my soul with awe,
And something in me bids me speak.

Dear wife, 'tis not the hand of God
That brought about this cunning plan
To rule us with an iron rod;
It is but selfishness of man.

But it is late and time to seek
An unpretending place of rest;
I told you this peculiar freak
To ease my care-worn, troubled breast.

Go bring the Bible from the shelf,
The good old book I dearly prize;
A world of riches in itself,
That is not bound by mortgage ties.

The faithful wife produced the book,
Which opened of its own accord
To Nehemiah, chapter fifth,
And they perused the holy Word.

Then knelt they down in humble prayer,
With lines of faith upon their brow,
And earnestly they prayed that God
Would send a Nehemiah now.

STANZAS IN AN ALBUM.

CANNOT help but think, friend Kate,
How truly blessed the man will be,
Who some day will be fortunate
Enough to share his life with thee.

Your cheerful smile from day to day,
Like sunbeams dancing on the lea,
Like roses strewn upon his way,
How could be choose but worship thee?

LINES TO RUTH.

O NIGHT, I have the meanest cold
That ever yet has taken hold
Of me with fiendish power;
Yet, tune my harp and let me sing,
And bid my restless thoughts take wing,
Let song beguile the hour.

And while I sing I'll serenade
Fair Ruth, the ever cheerful maid,
With beauteous raven hair;
Whose eyes like stars in beauty shine,
Whose sunny smile is more sublime
Than sunbeams in the air.

Yes Ruth, I sing not to the dames,
The proud, high born whose haughty names
In leading papers shine;
Although they travel far and wide
In costly robes with pomp and pride,
And drink the choicest wine.

What though at Washington they dance,
And round the greatest statesmen prance
And dress elaborate;
And spend a fortune every year,
And nearly rob their papa dear,
Can never make them great.

Give me a maid, friend Ruth, like thee;
As independent, bright, and free,
And not afraid to toil,
A girl who can in time of need
Earn her own food and clothes, indeed,
And make no great turmoil.

These are the girls that I admire,
To them I tune my willing lyre,
In gentle strain of praise.
Hail to the countless thousand girls,
The grandest, purest, brightest pearls
On which the eye can gaze!









